



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Request for Community Archaeological Dig on Cave Hill
Date:	15 September 2011
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Fintan Grant, City Park Manager North

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The Committee is asked to note that the council has received a request to hold an event on Cave Hill for the purpose of carrying out an archaeological dig at Ballyagahagan cashel. This will be led and organised by the Belfast Hills Partnership (BHP). The event will begin on 17 October 2011 and finish on 26 October 2011 (weather dependant).</p> <p>During this time local schools and community groups will be invited along to have “hands on” experience of a small dig and surveying the Cashel via measuring and drawing of its features. An open day for the general public will also be undertaken.</p> <p>Following on from this a report on findings will be produced along with graphics which will be summarised on an interpretative panel to be erected on the site.</p> <p>This basic archaeological investigation is designed to engage and connect communities, particularly children, with their joint heritage. This unique “hands on” experience will spark a greater interest in Belfast’s rich heritage and in the importance of Cave Hill Country Park.</p> <p>The Belfast Hills Partnership is about to embark on a landscape partnership scheme which has a strong heritage theme, encouraging people to learn more about the past history of the hills and so want to look after them for future generations. This fits in with BHP’s aim to look after the hills, wildlife and people which in turn will add value to Cave Hill Country Park.</p> <p>This proposal is important as it would be the first heritage event in its new landscape partnership scheme and will help raise the profile of the work it hopes to undertake throughout the scheme. It will be a great way to bring various people together in a joint interest as well as enabling BHP to work more closely with Belfast City Council, raising both profiles positively.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>Belfast Hills Partnership will be responsible for all public liability and other insurances associated with the dig.</p> <p>There will be minimal disturbance to park users. It is proposed that 2 trenches will be excavated (so large groups of children etc. can be divided), approx 0.6m wide by 2m long. Access will be gained from the car park at Hightown Road.</p> <p>The dig will be carried out by NIEA Built Heritage and QUB Field Centre on behalf of BHP. All relevant permissions have been obtained.</p> <p>The Cave Hill Conservation Group has been consulted and would like a briefing and input as the dig is taking place.</p> <p>Reinstatement will be carried out by Belfast Hills Partnership on 27, 28 October.</p> <p>The site will be secured each evening using temporary fencing.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> There will be no financial implications for Belfast City Council</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are no additional human resource implications at this time.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> If the site has historical significance it will enhance the visitor experience to what is already a great asset for the citizens of Belfast.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	<p>This will build positive relationships with other committed stakeholders who have a vested interest in Cave Hill Country Park.</p>

5	Recommendations
	<p>Committee is asked to grant permission for this event to take place subject to the event organisers meeting all statutory and legal requirements.</p>

6	Decision Tracking
	<p>Committee decision to be communicated to the BHP by the City Park Manager North.</p>

7	Key to Abbreviations
BHP: Belfast Hills Partnership NIEA: Northern Ireland Environment Agency	

8	Documents Attached
None.	